

The Stars and Stripes

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FEBRUARY 22, 1919

This year's anniversary of the birth of George Washington sees a goodly portion of the American Army keeping watch and ward over the land of a vanquished foe, the most cruel and unscrupulous foe that Americans have ever been called upon to face. It sees another goodly portion of the American Army at rest or maneuvers in the fair land of France, waiting its return to the United States. The prospect would have pleased George Washington, trouncer of Hessians, lover of France and France's fighting men, and the first Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the United States.

But it is not George Washington the soldier, great soldier though he was, who should most occupy the minds of the A. E. F. on this, his approaching anniversary. It is George Washington the ex-soldier; George Washington the good citizen, who when war was done quietly betook himself to his plantation on the banks of the Potomac and strove valiantly in peace as in war to make his country great; George Washington the public-spirited, who, even against his will, lent his aid in the formation of the Constitution, and took office under the United States as its first President. "First in war," let it not be forgotten that he was also "first in peace"—first in whatever path of public duty lay before him to tread.

George Washington, ex-soldier, did not seek to live upon his laurels. He pitched in and helped in the formation of the new republic that was to be, sacrificing ease, and comfort, and financial reward. That is why the third of his great titles is "first in the hearts of his countrymen." That is why his example is worth following by every American soldier honorably discharged from service.

MARKED MEN

From overseas come the echoes of bitter controversy. The multitudinous ears of the A. E. F., strained to catch the sounds of "Welcome home" and the chorus of "Well done," have been assailed instead by the discordant notes of violent combat. Is the Constitution threatened with annulment? No. A general strike ordered? Not at all. Civil war declared? Not yet. No, the question that is rending the otherwise fairly United States is simply this: Shall the home-staying soldiers be distinguished from the members of the A. E. F. by wearing a silver chevron instead of a gold?

Out of all the hubbub and from all the welter of letters to the editor printed by the ton back home there emerges, clear and challenging, this argument: "The question as to whether a soldier stayed at home or sailed to France was not for him to decide. For those of us who stayed behind it was a deep and bitter disappointment. Why rub it in by compelling us to wear the badge of our regret?"

To which the A. E. F. might reply that if it was no disgrace to have served as a soldier at home (which it certainly was not), then why should the insignia of such service make the wearer blush? But now comes the news that the House, Committee on Military Affairs has ingeniously solved the whole imbroglio by reporting to Congress a bill which abolishes all chevrons, whether gold or silver—news which, it must be admitted, is being received throughout the A. E. F. with a somewhat contemptuous exasperation, saved from ill-humor by the sweetening of laughter.

For, after all, the men of the A. E. F. are, by the experiences they have had, marked men for all time. They will not need chevrons to be recognizable. Those who could not get here are incalebly poorer in all those memories which go to make a life rich. The "greatest show on earth" came to their town and they did not see it. They drew a blank in the biggest game mankind ever played. We had the luck.

VERDUN

We are going to take Verdun, the greatest fortress of France. Then it will be peace. There is going to be a struggle the like of which the world has never seen.

(From a letter found on the body of a German Infantryman, February, 1916.)

In war there can be but one decision, but there may be a whole multitude of decisive battles—battles which, had they gone otherwise than they did, would have meant victory or defeat. It was in this sense that the first battle of the Marne was decisive—because, had France lost it, Germany would have won the war. The counter-offensive that began July 18, 1918, giving the Allies an initiative that they have not yet relinquished, was decisive in a positive sense, for Germany did lose it in all its manifold co-ordinated phases—in Belgium, on and beyond the Somme, on the Aisne, on the Argonne—and Germany thereby lost the war.

The battle of Verdun was decisive because if France had lost it she would have lost the war.

The last great authoritative account of Verdun—to be written perhaps a dozen, perhaps a thousand, years hence—may or may not relate that the battle, announced at 4 o'clock on the morning of February 21, 1916, by the explosion of a heavy shell within the city itself, was initiated solely in order to forestall a hypothetical Allied offensive (which materialized none the less in July on the Somme), and that the region of Verdun was selected for purely tactical reasons.

That account will state, however, that Verdun actually did develop into a battle

between France and Germany; that the contending forces in all that welter of snow and mud and blood were more than armed hosts in the death grapple—they were the souls of a free republic and of a militarized despotism.

Verdun came to mean that in less than a week. And in just two days over that week—on February 29, 1916—the supreme embodiment of one of those two kinds of soul, after parading hither and yon with great words in the back areas, after announcing his intention of conferring the field marshal's baton on his son within the soon to be attained stronghold itself, was on his way back to Berlin.

"Tactical success partial, battle lost," wrote a terse German critic in the early days of March. Had it not been so, instead of helping celebrate today the third anniversary of the battle of Verdun, the A. E. F., not an expeditionary force, but an army fighting for its country's salvation on its country's own soil, might be battling desperately at this very moment to save New York on the last natural line of defense from the northeast, a low cluster of hills in southwestern Connecticut with whose name not a thousandth of the A. E. F. is familiar. Who, for the matter of that, three years ago today, had ever heard of the Cote du Poivre, Douaumont, or Le Mort Homme?

IN BLACK AND WHITE

Standing among the dignitaries of the foreign offices, the sovereigns of States, the members of cabinets, the diplomatists and the writers who heard President Wilson read the draft of the League of Nations last Friday were some men in khaki whose "rank and title" in the registration book reads simply, "Private, U.S.A."—some of the men whose presence in France during the months just past made possible the League of Nations.

They heard the President say that the plan was made for the "men who go to bed tired at night and wake up without hope"; they heard the words of the covenant itself that is proposed to end all wars spoken clearly and emphatically by their Commander-in-Chief, and they saw the printed copies in the hands of the delegates. They knew then that the thing that their comrades had fought and died for through a winter and around the seasons until one November morning was real—it was there on paper for all the world to read.

There was little ceremony, there was no debate, there was nothing to show of the days of earnest discussion, of claim and counter-claim, of doubt and faith and the power that drove out the doubt and downed the opposition. The draft was read and explained, and that was all.

It is not yet accepted. It was not even submitted without reservation on the part of some members of the commission that helped to draw it up. But it is there, surely "a living thing," as the President himself called it, with as fair a chance for success among the United States of Civilization as had the Constitution of the United States of America when it came before the sceptic and fearful councillors, the doubters and cynics in the legislatures of the original States, who very likely sneered at the "idealistic document," far too impractical to be worthy of their support.

The privates who heard the draft of the covenant of the League of Nations believe that their comrades did not die in vain.

2 + 2 = ?

Along with Adam and a few other people who, because of apples and other things, didn't do all by posterity that they might have, may be classed the man who invented arithmetic. The discovery of the stupendous, but doubtful, fact that two and two makes four started something which isn't finished yet.

This paper recently printed the insignia and skeleton histories of the divisions of the A. E. F. in which was included the number of prisoners captured by each. Prompted more by a natural inquisitiveness than by a postcard from a private to the effect that "if the K. P.'s of his company hadn't captured more prisoners than his whole division was credited with" he would eat his overseas cap fried (and a few dozen other like communications), we struck a total of the prisoners attributed to all the divisions. The total was 62,315.

The joke is that all the prisoners the A. E. F. can scrape up for roll call and computation is 49,000-odd, with the information that a few hundred more, turned over to the French at the front, will be returned.

It isn't quite clear whom this is on, but, before we set 'em up for a round, it may be stated that the divisional totals printed came from the staffs of the divisions themselves and that the most reasonable explanation advanced is that prisoners were given from one outfit to another in battle, sometimes to a unit of another army, and that some of the Boche were counted twice. Anyhow, it's an average.

FEET

There is no truth in the report from America that men's shoe stores will in future carry no sizes under 9½. In fact, there has been no such report. But it would be easy to start one, just the same.

The bitter truth is, as 100 per cent of the Army must know, that squads eating and vesting, coupled with long hikes to the front, and long hikes back, and long hikes somewhere else, and standing guard, and standing K. P. (with no discarded tomato cases available), and standing in chow line, and standing in dish-wash line, and otherwise disposing one's self erect, tend—if one may have recourse to an ancient quip—to broaden the understanding. The broadening process is aided and abetted by the so-called trench shoe, which has survived the trenches, and which is certainly not light and probably not fantastic.

So, when our grandchildren ask even the least of us what we did in the Great War, we can say, almost to a man, "I went in with 6½'s and came out with 8D's." And we can add, in all solemnity and truth, "Feet won the war."

The Army's Poets

SERVICE CHEVRONS

You can strip him of his chevrons,
You can take his stripes away,
And the badge of his division,
Which produces your dismay:
You can make him scrap his medals,
But, no matter how you try,
You can never, never legislate
That glitter from his eye.

He has seen a summer day
That you have never dreamed;
He has seen flesh turn to clay,
While affronted Heaven screamed;
He has seen the shattered trench,
He has seen the twisted wire,
He has seen strong, living men
Charred and black in molten fire;
He has seen beneath his feet
Flesh of comrades turn to clay;
As you never could have dreamed
He has seen a summer day.

You can ban the golden arrow
That is stitched on his right sleeve,
And "eradicate distinction"
With a simple by your leave,
Promulgate your resolutions,
Hurl the ink until you die,
But you can't sponge his memory
Nor the glitter from his eye.

He has seen an autumn night
That you could never bear,
With hell's flare his only light,
Pointing out hell's angel there;
He has known a single hour
When cold steel, red hail and gas
Ceased and left a holy calm
Such as come when angels pass;
He has seen his comrades stand,
Half-transfigured in release,
Knights, spurred and panoplied
By their liege, the Prince of Peace.

ARTILLERIST.

THE OTHER SIDE

Darling, here's your hero bold:
Silver stripes instead of gold
Shine upon my sleeve today,
'Cause I couldn't sail away.

SHE
But, my darling, don't you bleat.
No one thinks you had cold feet;
You had to do as you were told—
Silver stripes instead of gold.

DAVID M. MACQUARIE,
Chaplain, Camp Merritt, N. J.

RECOMPENSE

I may not see again the sunshine falling,
June eventide, athwart a cottage door
Where mocking birds, in arias entralling,
Their golden floods of melody outpour.
Where roses red, thrilling with rapture,
Climb upward with their wondrous scent and bloom,
Shedding their fragrant petals as they capture
Their paradise—the easement of their room.

And as I skulk in dark and sodden trenches,
Befouled with mud and slime and clotting blood,
My soul is stifled with the awful stench
That surge upon me in a stinking flood:
Before me, grisly heaps of dead and dying,
Fusing fast, blot out the smiling sky,
And all at once my tortured soul is crying,
"Why?—in fevered, mad rebellion—'why?'"

And then it seems that God, in wondrous fashion,
Fathoms the depth of human agony,
And gently stills the spirit's fiery passion,
Revealing what the recompense shall be.

The little cottage by the maples shaded,
Where roses red up to her casement steal,
Shall never have its sanctity invaded—
Roses petals ground beneath the Prussian heel!
She shall not see the hostile hordes assailing,
Nor shudder from their butchery, nor—worse,
Shriek to the savage Huns prayers unavailing,
Who answer with a laugh, a shot, a curse.

She shall not see the last, red-glowing ember,
The fiery sparks from blackened ruins pour,
And, gazing at the awful scene, remember
Nay, she whose purest love is my life's core,
Shall not at midnight start from troubled rest,
In terror shriek at one, who, swiftly creeping,
Leaves her at dawn with bleeding, sword-
slashed breast.

I may not see again the sunshine falling,
June eventide, athwart a cottage door—
But mocking birds, in arias entralling,
Shall golden floods of melody outpour;
And roses red, each June, in wildest rapture,
Shall bring to her their fragrance and their bloom.
Though I may never see them as they capture
Their paradise—the easement of her room.

Pvt. JAMES R. ELDREDGE.

BUDDIES O' MINE

You were right, Mister William T. Sherman,
When you uttered that message divine,
For only today I have laid them away—
Those two little buddies of mine.

We had crossed in a transport from Gotham
To the papers and the papers and the papers,
We had buddled together in any old weather,
And together we'd taken our chance.

And many a time in our hiking
When I was unable to crawl,
They carried the pack that was slung on my
back—
With never a kick at it all.

Rugged, they were, tough and sturdy—
Though maybe they never would shine
In a high-brow café on the rue de Broadway,
They were genuine buddies of mine.

And now that their duty is finished
The thought that is left to console
Is: though they were rough, they were made of
real stuff
And each of them harbored a sole.

So thus, when the snow fell this morning
And keen as a whip was the air,
My buddies checked in—to a fat sergeant's grin,
Who issued me then a new pair.

Pvt. JOHN P. E. ENIGOS,
A. P. O. 758.

EXPIATION

Time was, O Lord, I feared to die,
The joyous days, so free from care,
Kept my base thoughts from mounting high
Above the earth that seemed so fair.

But now my life I humbly lay
In expiation at Thy feet,
In this my most holy day
Thy mercy, Lord, when we shall meet.

Lt. Chaplain THOMAS F. COAKLEY.

MY SWEETHEART

I left her one day and hurried away
To answer Democracy's call;
A tear dimmed her eye as I kissed her goodbye,
And she swore she loved me above all.

This sweetheart of mine, a vision divine,
Was the fairest that heaven could send;
And though I did grieve, she made me believe,
She'd be faithful to me to the end.

Does she dance with joy when some other boy
Says, "Dearie, let's go to a show?"
Does she jump with glee and say "Come sit near me?"
On the sofa that I used to know?

Don't think that I fear, when she's so sincere;
She is, for she vowed she would be.
Does she not sit out nights and take me in the sights?
She does! you can take it from me!

HOWARD A. HERTY,
Regt. Sgt. Maj., Int.

ROOSEVELT

(January 8, 1919.)
Pirm of conviction,
Mighty and strong,
Warrior of Freedom,
Foe of the wrong;
Rest with thy laurels
Won in the fight;
Great is the victory,
When right is might!
Farwell, great statesman,
Sweet be thy rest
Under the banner
Victory has blessed;
Fame was thy portion,
But in God's hand
You stood foursquare, as
America's man!

C. R. TAYLOR,
Cpl., Hqs. Det., 17th Engrs. (Ry.).

THE FIRST YANK



Washington's Birthday, 1778

CAN'T BE HUMAN

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—
Most all the grumbling that goes on in our company about the chow, about going home, about the Top Kicker, or about the million and one other things that we can give vent to, the inexhaustible store of ticks that we have laid up, there is only one member of the company who has never said a word in regard to these troubles, and so far as I know he has never let such things as hating the Terrible Top enter his mind, even in a secret.

Although this member has been with the company for about seven months, he claims two service stripes. He doesn't fuss about them, but when spoken to on such matters he simply looks you straight in the eye and would have you to understand that he saw real front line service before the majority of Field Hospital No. 7 ever did. Of course, he can't prove this, as his service record has never been forwarded to the company, and probably never will be and there is some doubt as to his ever having been sworn into the service at all.

Anyway, we will let that part of it drop, for he has seen some real service since being with our company and we'll all have to agree that he is there with the goods when it comes to being a good skate. And say, you just ought to see him pass up these loots on the street without saluting. A few of the boys have seen him pass up a general once, and any number of colonels, majors and captains, and the best of it all is that he gets by with this stuff of his.

He joined our company while in the second battle of the Marne, went through the whole offensive without a scratch, helped to wipe out the St. Mihiel salient, and took a hand in the Argonne offensive, and during this whole time he never had a new issue of clothing or equipment. Most extraordinary thing, considering the amount of clothing some of our company did away with during that period of time.

Well, to prove that we are fighting the hardest part of the war right here on the Rhine, this faithful, brave and well behaved soldier has been allowed to let out one howl, and this was at the bugler that always blows reveille about an hour too early for the whole company. The fact is, he would never have registered this howl at all, but he was just voicing his sentiments of the whole company and he felt justified when he did it.

Oh, yes, we came very near forgetting to tell you his name. It is "Plage, Camille"; serial number, 000,000; mascot, Co. P. F. 7, Med. Depot.

He swears by all that is good and holy that none of those cheap, yellow-livered curs back in the States will ever be allowed to associate with him if they can't show service stripes and cooties instead of the ordinary run of common dog fleas.

As to Camille's never receiving a scratch while in action, there is room for discussion.

THOMAS BLAISE,
Field Hospital No. 7.

DIPLOMAS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—
While we were outwitting the Hun we were also getting a speedy education in subjects that no college class room offers—a knowledge of the relative value of things and a background, bright and pure, and new ideas. I might say it is somewhat similar to the perspective one gets in studying history. We were being taught some grand lessons, developing a wonderful sense of the proportion of things. We learned the unimportance of trivial disputes and the emptiness of petty desires.

The theater of operations of going through hell was to us a school of experience. The courses offered were unusually interesting. We took as many as we saw fit, showing no regard for grades. When we got a Hun or two we were given credit for a perfect recitation for the day. Classes ran day and night; sometimes one period lasted 24 hours and 25 hours on Sundays and holidays.

The class rooms were so constructed that you couldn't push the fellow who, sat next to you off the bench and cause the class to become disorderly. Each individual had a bench of his own, which he carried on his shoulder. When trouble started or he found things becoming disorderly he used it to good advantage.

We had no recess, study hour or time to prepare our lessons; no mail service, consequently

HEADLINES OF A YEAR AGO

From THE STARS AND STRIPES OF
February 22, 1918.

FRESH FROM TRENCHES TO DELIGHTS OF AIX—First American Permis-
sionnaires Given Rousing Welcome on
Arrival in France. Savory Watering
Place—Mayor Extends Greetings for
townfolk—Colored Band Leads Troops
Through Streets—Seventy Hotels Ready
to House Thousands Who Will Soon
Flock to Resort.

TUSCANIA LOSS IS STERLING TEST
OF NATION'S MIND—News of Trans-
port's Sinking Taken Quietly and Reso-
lutely—Weather Turns Pro-Ally—Freight
Trains Again in Motion and Competition
of Seaports is Greatly Reduced—Labor
Looks to Government—Mediation Com-
mission Wins Favor by Impartial Hand-
ling of Vexing Problems.

MORE TIME GIVEN ON WAR RISK
PLAN—Congress Makes April 12 Final
Date for Taking Out Protection.

MADE IN FRANCE BY THE U.S.
ARMY—Articles Difficult to Ship Are
Milled in Overseas Shops.

checks from home were never given a thought. The school of experience did not encourage athletics; we had no teams, so winning Saturday's game and making a rep for ourselves or the big parties at the end of the season, did not worry us.

Some of the brightest and best fellows in the school never finished their freshman year, but they got the dips, real dips they were, made of material far more precious than sheepskin covered with gold. These were the Honor students. We had a wonderful class day on November 11. Commencement exercises will be held the day the Peace Treaty is signed.

HAVELOCK E. PHILLIPS,
Pvt., Base Hospital No. 31.

SPELLERS, CENTER!

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—
In order to insert a little novelty into the competition which is going on between different individuals, divisions, etc., in the A. E. F., I wish to issue a challenge to any individual in the A. E. F. from the Chief of Staff down to the lowest buck to meet me in a spelling contest at any time and place suitable to both parties, the only rules governing the contest to be that each party shall be given no less than one thousand and no more than ten thousand words to be chosen by a committee of three disinterested parties.

Webster's Dictionary shall be the final authority in case of dispute, the party misspelling the fewest number of words to be declared winner of the contest.

I also wish to issue a challenge to any man or men in the A. E. F. to meet me in a reading contest, the material to be read being any piece of English prose, and that participant being declared winner who reads with the best expression. The piece of prose read shall be chosen by a committee of three disinterested parties, from any source whatever, and shall be of such length as to consume a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 45 minutes, figuring on a basis of 150 words to the minute.

HAROLD A. MACCALLUM,
Pvt., 310th Field Hospital.

WHY CELEBRATE?

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—
A little suggestion from an old head of the U.S. Army: Why are the States going through all the expense of welcoming homecoming soldiers? Why not let the soldiers be discharged immediately upon their arrival in the United States and the States and Government give the soldiers that have done their bit for democracy a bonus which would be of profit to these men, their wives and kids, instead of spending millions of dollars throughout the U.S.A. for such purposes as above stated? This campaign should be started by all the newspapers instead of starting campaigning for such little things as refreshments for soldiers; their mothers, sisters, etc., would certainly furnish the men with articles of this sort.

AN OLD SOLDIER,
Hqrs. Troop, 33rd Division.

BATTER UP

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—
Having read so much about pancake miracles in your esteemed paper, it would seem an injustice to omit the following:

Breakfast by parcel post has been the cry for so many years that, enterprised by big ideas, a factory that later grew into an immense plant was, a few years ago, started at Seldom, Ill. The plant at present covers all of that town and one-third of Never, Ill. Canned pancakes in pure syrup are sold so fast that they need no introduction. They are shipped to every corner of the earth, except France. The owner will not embarrass mess sergeants under any circumstances. This plant is so large that it would make a circus parade look like a quibble chasing its mother over Brooklyn bridge.

Freight trains of 84 flat cars each constantly stream through the plant. When the empty trains arrive, they are unloaded directly into a position to receive the cakes, four of these latter being allotted to a can. The train following carries also 84 cars—50 with pancakes, 24 with syrup and ten with tin-can covers. The pancake cars are so constructed that the simple touch of a lever sends 480 cakes from each car into the cans simultaneously every ten minutes. The syrup cars have perforated bottoms that fill every can to the brim. These are followed by the last ten cars that place on the covers, hermetically sealing each can. The cars of the next train are equipped with magnetic bottoms that automatically pick up every can, clearing the floor beneath for the next load of empties following.

The cakes are made right on the cars, which are greased by a steamroller. A little further up the line are 480 nozzles that fill each car with 480 cakes, every time they sput. The batter enters these nozzles at Hardy, Ill., four miles distant. The next stop sees the train running through the ovens. The cakes are turned over by the vibrations of a squad of buglers who are constantly blowing mess call. Twenty-four thousand cakes are baked every ten minutes, or 1,152,000 in an eight-hour day.

Every mess sergeant is invited to inspect this plant. He will receive a sample that will bring tears to his eyes and cause him to write a book entitled: "Why Mess Sergeants Worry."

The owner of this plant was a buck private in the Spanish-American War and promised to get even with his mess sergeant, whose hobby was to eliminate seconds. Success is his. Visit the ovens. A warm welcome awaits you. If you are fond of baseball, do not fail to see the 480 batters in action.

HENRY FISHER,
Pvt., Co. D, 501st Engrs.

P. S.—One to a man. No seconds.

NOT REGULATION

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—
Being a chronic grouch, I have found something in THE STARS AND STRIPES on which to harp. I have read your paper for nearly a year and in that time I never found the slightest chance in which to open up till I had read every word and every advertisement on every page of this issue and finally reached the advertisement of a certain well-known American clothing firm at the bottom of the last column of the last page. If this firm, which expects to do a land office business when the boys return to the U.S.A., really wants to realize this expectation, it had better get a doughboy to illustrate its advertisements. If you will notice, the three squads pictured have eight men to the rank; it looks more like a crowd of hungry stowaways charging the mess line or perhaps it is from a photo of old Company D, 161st Infantry (at Is-sur-Tille last winter), rushing forward when Sgt. Don Proctor asked for volunteers to unload a carload of blacksmith's coal on a Sunday afternoon. The artist, or perhaps cartoonist, who drew this evidently has never been to the small towns of France, or he would know that it would be an impossibility to march a column of eight files through the streets.

Now that I have this off my chest, I feel better. I know it must have hurt your makeup man to have to put such a caricature in your most wonderful yearling of a newspaper. If I see a better picture adorning this ad next week, I will be

Your almost entirely felled grouch,
A. E. F. Grouch.